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Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture



SPRING 1995

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

AT ISSUE . . . VICISSITUDINOUS

The word is one that you rarely hear in conversation and I certainly would not anoint conversation with this tongue-twister. However, in the final days of 1994, I heard the word, or its "cousin," vicissitudes, resounding in the hallways of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Webster defines vicissitudes as "the quality or state of being changeable" and vicissitudinous as "marked by, or filled with, vicissitudes." The Office for Small-Scale Agriculture (OSSA) has recently experienced major changes, and it's important for the readers of this newsletter to be informed and updated.

On October 20, 1994, [then] Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy merged the Cooperative States Research Service (CSRS) and the Extension Service (ES) to create the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). Although the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture moved to a new location in Room 3349, South Building, our mailing address remains the same: Ag Box 2244, Washington, DC 20250-2244.

OSSA has received many letters complaining that our office could not be reached by fax or telephone during this period. Yes, there were some untimely inconveniences. The **Good NEWS** is that our equipment is up and running now. Please be patient! Budgetary restrictions prevent us from having more than one telephone line - 202-720-5245 - and it remains busy. Our fax is 202-205-2448.

Another recent requirement that affects OSSA is that **All** outgoing mail must bear a **Typed** mailing label. Previously, we were able to address many of our envelopes by hand, thus expediting requests for information. I, however, do not type; therefore, when you request information from OSSA in the future, **Always** include a self-addressed **Typed** gummed label so that we may send materials to you promptly. If you are writing to request that your name be placed on the *Small-Scale Agriculture Today* newsletter mailing list, please include **Two**

Typed, self-addressed gummed labels, and be sure to include your full 9-digit zip code. Information requests without the latter cannot be processed.

The Chinese word for "crisis" is composed of two picture-characters. The first means "danger;" the second, "opportunity." We do not have a perfect answer to the inconveniences our constituents have experienced because of our recent move. OSSA can only request your cooperation and patience. The dynamics and challenges of change are continuous and I sincerely hope that the many changes will present new opportunities for all. (Howard W. "Bud" Kerr, Jr., USDA-CREES-OSSA, March 1, 1995)

Moving? Please let OSSA know your new address. Send a typed card with your new address and attach the former address mailing label from the most recent issue of *Small-Scale Agriculture Today*. **Duplicate copies?** Send a written request - including the mailing label - that the duplicate name be removed from our mailing list. **Remember**, our mailing address remains the same: Office for Small-Scale Agriculture, USDA-CSREES, AG BOX 2244, Washington, DC 20250-2244.

TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

Two More — "Herbs" and "Bees" are the latest factsheets in the series *A Small-Scale Agriculture Alternative* from the USDA Office for Small-Scale Agriculture. The factsheets are free upon request and list several sources of information. Contact: Bud Kerr, USDA-OSSA (Factsheets), AG Box 2244, Washington, DC 20250-2244; telephone: 202-720-5245; fax: 202-205-2448.

Available — The 216-page *1994 Agriculture Fact Book* can be ordered for \$8 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Include the stock number (001-000-04616-1) when ordering. Telephone: 202-512-1800, fax 202-512-2250.

Gaining — "For the fifth consecutive year, orders of organic food rose more than 20 percent, according to a survey by the Natural Foods Merchandiser. The total organic food bill: \$1.89 billion." (Kernels, September/October 1994, p. 18)

Must Reading — Gene Logsdon writes in his book "The Contrary Farmer" that "... Today, people understand so little about farming that they can't appreciate how fascinating the work can be." The 240-page publication can be obtained for \$25.95 from Peggy Robinson, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 205 Gates-Briggs Bldg., P.O.Box 428, White River Junction, VT 05001; telephone: 1-800-639-4099.

Safety Tip — Whenever you work with fiberglass, wear gloves, long sleeves, long pants, safety goggles, and a dust mask.

New Book — The 207-page publication *The Small Commercial Garden (How to Make \$10,000 in Your Backyard)* is unique, since the author, Dan Hakenson, describes not only success stories, but also mistakes. To receive a copy, send your check for \$20.90 to PC-Services, P.O.Box 7294, Bismark, ND 58507-7294; telephone: 1-800-871-4296.

Marketing — *Direct Marketing of Farm Produce and Home Goods* is an attractively illustrated 25-page publication, featuring descriptions of six direct marketing alternatives: pick-your-own, roadside markets, farmers markets, subscription farming, home delivery, and selling to institutions. Price: \$14.55. Contact: Carol Pollock, Cooperative Extension Publications, Room 245, 30 North Murray Street, Madison, WI 53715; telephone: 608-262-3346.

Excellent — The books *Bees Wasps and Ants*, *Cardinals, Robins and Other Birds* and *Butterflies and Moths* are great books for kids and adults new to rural living. Each book costs \$8. Contact: Dick Donovan, Donovan Music and Toys, 732 Clinton Street, Waukesha, WI 53186; telephone: 1-800-236-7123.

Did You Know? — The USA has only 6 percent of the world's population, but consumes 35 percent of the world's energy.

50 and Over — Understanding state taxes can help you plan for your future. *The State Tax Laws Reference Guide* is available free from AARP Investment Programs. Contact: Karen Igler, Scudder, Inc., 345 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10154; telephone: 212-326-6636.

Guidebook — *How to Find your Ideal Country Home: Ruralize Your Dreams* is an unusual book (more than 300-pages) containing illustrations, maps and national, state, and local resources list. Costs \$24.95. Contact: Gene GeRue, Heartwood Publications, HC 78, Box 1105, Zanon, MO 65784; telephone: 417-261-2610.

New — 1995 Proceedings, New York State Vegetable Conference. The 206-page paperback book sells for \$14. Contact: Jean Warholie, New York State Vegetable Growers Association, P.O.Box 4256, Ithaca, NY 14852-4256; telephone: 607-539-7648.

Draft Animals — The 1995 edition of *The Enever Work Horse, Mule and Oxen Directory and Guide* is now available. The 68 pages of resources and technical details on the use of draft animal power costs \$6. Contact: Gail Damerow, Rural Heritage, 281-A Dean Ridge Lane, Gainsboro, TN 38562; telephone: 615-268-0655.

Colorado — *A Guide to Rural Living and Small-Scale Agriculture* targets Colorado residents. However, the 80-page book contains practical information for people moving to the rural areas. The cost is \$7 per copy. Contact: C. J. Mucklow, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Routt County, P. O. Box 772830, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477; telephone: 303-879-0825.

Question — One acre-inch of water equals how many gallons? (a) 27,154 (b) 32,286 (c) 37,640. Answer is somewhere in this newsletter.

Cost \$15 — Proceedings of the 1994 *Putting Small Acreage to Work* seminar. The 68-page publication provides some ideas for alternative enterprises and marketing strategies. Also there is a 13-page bibliography of information concerning small farming operations. Contact: Diane Diewer, Unit Leader (check payable to Sangamon/Menard Unit) Extension Unit, P.O. Box 8467, Springfield, IL 62791-8467; telephone: 217-782-4617.

Heard — If you sprinkle wood ashes around fruit trees and berry plants, the potash will improve the sweetness of the fruit.

Celebrate! — The 25th anniversary of Earth Day is April 22, 1995.

Costs \$13.95 — Farmers tell about organic and low-input practices in the Northeast in the 264-page book, *The Real Dirt*. Contact: Beth Holtzman, Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Hills Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0082; telephone: 802-656-0471.

Searching? — Copies of a catalog of available nineteenth century *American Farm and Garden* are available for \$1. Contact: Judith Bloomgarden, Book Arbor, P.O. Box 20885, Baltimore, MD 21209-9998; telephone: 410-367-0338.

Illustrated Agricultural Dictionary — Spanish-English/English-Spanish. This publication is designed for use in daily interaction with Spanish speaking people. Cost: \$30.45. Contact: Laura Mann, Thomson Publications, P.O.Box 9335, Fresno, CA 93791; telephone: 209-435-2163; fax: 209-435-8319.

Seeking Out — "One in three shoppers seeks out organically grown fruits and vegetables, and more would probably do so if organic produce cost less and looked better." (*The Wall Street Journal*, September 23, 1994, p. B1).

Gobble, Gobble! — The wild turkey is one of America's most remarkable wildlife restoration success stories. If you want to know more about this wily game bird, contact: National Wild Turkey Federation, P.O.Box 530, Edgefield, SC 29824, telephone: 803-637-3106.

American Success Story — *Farm Facts*, illustrates the wonders of American agriculture in 26 colorful pages at a cost of \$3 each, or \$1.25 each for 3 or more copies.. Contact: Rita Walaszek, American Farm Bureau Federation, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068; telephone: 312- 399-5700; fax 312-399-5896.

Caffeine Use — A free copy of *Caffeine and Women's Health* is available by sending a self- addressed, stamped envelope to Caffeine and Women's Health, P.O. Box 1144, Rockville, MD 20850.

Favorite Subjects — *Country, Farm and Ranch Living, Country Women, Reminisce, Taste of Home, Country Handicrafts, Pets, As You Were, and Birds and Blooms* are magazines without advertisements. Sample copies are available for \$2.95 each. Contact: Ann Kaiser, Reiman Publications, 5400 S. 60th Street, Greendale, WI 53129; telephone: 414-423-0100, fax: 414-423-1143.

Remember — There are three things to be kept in mind when setting strawberries: the crown should be kept at the proper height - above the soil; the roots spread out to give better contact with the soil; and, the soil should be pressed firmly around the roots.

Kitchen Reference — *4001 Food Facts and Chef's Secrets* is a 282-page book containing thousands of entries that can be incorporated into daily lifestyles. The cost is \$17.95. Contact: Peggy Irvin, Mylin Publishing, 9528 Miramar Road, Suite 13, San Diego, CA 92126; telephone: 1-800-497-6646.

Added Value — Dried fruit products are profitable for resale and are easy to use, greatly reducing labor. For free information, contact: Randy Atwater, Atwater Foods, Inc., 10190 Route 18, Lyndonville, NY 14098; telephone: 1-800-836-3972.

Periodical — The bimonthly 24-page *Acreage Advisor* is directed to the small farm and acreage owner. Send \$.75 postage to receive a free sample issue. A 1 year subscription (six issues) is \$9.95. Contact: Phil Pfeiffer, Acreage Advisor, 15400 N. 56th Street, Lincoln, NE 68514-9706; telephone/fax: 402-785-2220.

Old/New — For information about the Paw Paw Foundation, Contact: Neil Peterson, P. O. Box 23467, Washington DC 20026; telephone: 202-484-1121.

Horticultural Therapy — For some individuals, making the garden accessible is crucial. The 300- page book, *Accessible Gardening for People with Physical Disabilities*, costs \$20.95. Contact: Sarah Strickler, Woodbine House, 6510 Bells Mill Road, Bethesda, MD 20817; telephone: 1- 800-843-7323.

Free — Information kits about raising peafowl can be obtained from *The Peacock Journal*, Route 2, Box 435, Alto, GA 30510.

Free Booklet — *Tips on Land and Water Management for Small Farms and Ranches in Montana* is filled with lots of information and ideas. Contact: Marilyn Richardson, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, P.O.Box 202301, Helena, MT 59620-2301; telephone: 406-444-6668.

Answer — 27,154 gallons.

Disaster Loss — Producers of specialty crops and agricultural commodities which are not listed as "insurable" by USDA's crop insurance program should be aware that they do have disaster coverage available to them under the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). There are no charge for NAP coverage, but growers must report production acreage each year. Be Alert to the reporting requirement and contact your local office of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency (formerly ASCS) for more details. Not all counties have offices...

Alert — "Small part-time farmers are springing up around cities, attracting retailers such as Central Tractor Farm & Country of Des Moines, Iowa, which is on a 46-store building spree. Home Depot, Atlanta, is trying stores with a farm motif. Data is scarce, but many of the farmers seem to be frugal blue-collar workers." (*The Wall Street Journal*, March 16, 1995, p.A1)

Great Saying! — "The best fertilizer is the shadow of the farmer working his crops," words of Tom Reed, Crossville, TN, February 5, 1995.

AMERICAN WAY

"Is bigger always better? Probably not. But in business, better usually means you get bigger. Because if 'better' means that you are producing a quality product cheaper than your competitors, then you are going to make larger profits.

Now you can take those profits and live 'high on the hog' or you can reinvest some of those profits in your business in the hope of making even bigger profits in the future. Many businesses choose the latter pathway, and that's how good businesses get bigger. And that is the American way of doing things." (From "An Idea to Save Small Producers," *Delmarva Farmer*, February 16, 1995, p. 16, by Tom Hartsock, Department of Animal Science, University of Maryland, and part-time farmer.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 30, 31 — April 1, 2, 1995 — Mule Day '95, Columbia, TN. Contact: Linda Venable, Mule Day, P.O. Box 66, Columbia, TN 38402; telephone: 615-381-9557.

April 8, 1995 — Conservation Discovery Day; Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. Contact: Laurie A. Widmer, Howard County C.E.S., 3525-L Ellicott Mills Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043; telephone: 410-313-2707.

April 27-30, 1995 — The Third National Youth Entrepreneur Symposium, Ramada Congress Hotel, Chicago, IL. Contact: Nicky L. Jefferson, 2320 West Peterson Ave, Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60659; telephone: 312-761-5099, fax: 312-761-6955.

May 6, 7, 1995 — The 22nd Annual, Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. Contact: Leslie Bauer, Festival Office, P.O. Box 99, Glenwood, MD 21738; telephone: 410-531-3647.

May 16-18, 1995 — Aquatic Weed Control, Aquatic Plant Culture and Revegetation Short Course, Gainesville, FL. For more information, contact: University of Florida, IFAS Office of Conferences, P.O. Box 110750, Gainesville, FL 32611-0750; telephone: 904-392-5930; fax: 904-392-9734.

May 27, 1995 — Ninth Annual Baltimore Herb Festival, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Leakin Park (just off the Baltimore Beltway). Contact: Mary Louise Wolf, 2301 Pickwick Road, Baltimore, MD 21207; telephone: 410-448-0406.

June 3, 1995 — Seminar on Goat Health, Eastern Cashmere Association, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Contact: Jeanne Austin, 658 Route 565, Augusta, NJ 07822; telephone: 201-875-6911.

June 3, 1995 — Putting Small Acreage to Work seminar, Litchfield, IL. Contact: Gary Bullen, Macomb Extension Center, 480 Deere Road, Macomb, IL 611455; telephone: 309-836-3366.

June 10, 1995 — Kentucky Herb Festival, Carter House Pavilion (US 470 East), Frankfort, KY. Contact: Mary Peddie, KHG & MA, P.O. Box 123, Washington, KY 41096; telephone: 606-759-7815.

June 29-30, 1995 — The Illinois Outdoor Swine Production Export and Trade Show will be held at Black Hawk College on the 29th and at the Orr Research Center (near Perry, IL) on the 30th. Both sessions run from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and include educational seminars. Contact: Dean Oswald, Extension Educator, Animal Systems, Macomb, IL 61455; telephone: 309-836-2265.

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